

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 204948 TOSEC 040093
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UNCLAS STATE 104948 TOSEC 040093

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS - FRED BROWN

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.) AF

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS: POST EDITORIAL ON AFRICA

NO. 9

1. HERewith FULL TEXT OF WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL MAY 8
ENTITLED "WHAT IS OUR AFRICA POLICY?"

2. THE OTHER DAY ANDREW YOUNG PRONOUNCED THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT "ILLEGITIMATE" AND, WHEN CORRECTED BY THE STATE
DEPARTMENT, INSISTED STILL THAT THAT GOVERNMENT WAS
"UNREPRESENTATIVE" AND THAT IT WAS ONLY THE "AGENCY IN
CHARGE." OUR UNITED NATIONS AMBASSADOR THEN SET UP A
SERIES OF PRIVATE ENGAGEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA ON HIS OWN--
THAT IS, WITH AS LITTLE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AS POSSIBLE OF
PRETORIA'S AUTHORITY WITHIN ITS OWN BORDERS. UNSUR-
PRISINGLY, SOUTH AFRICA NOW DOES NOT WISH TO ADMIT MR.
YOUNG ON HIS CHOSEN TERMS. RATHER, IT WANTS HIM TO GO
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 204948 TOSEC 040093

THROUGH CHANNELS IN A MANNER COMPELLING HIM TO ACCEPT ITS
AUTHORITY. THUS HAS A TEST OF WILLS BEEN JOINED.

3. PUT ASIDE FOR THE MOMENT TH" FAMILIAR QUESTION OF
WHETHER MR. YOUNG WAS ACTING FOR HIS GOVERNMENT OR FOR
HIMSELF. IS HIS TACTIC OF UNDECLARED PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR-
FARE THE BEST WAY, OR A PROPER WAY, FOR THE UNITED STATES
TO ADVANCE ITS GOALS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA? WE DO NOT DIS-
MISS THIS APPROACH OUT OF HAND. MANY AMERICANS, AND NO
DOUBT MANY BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS (AND SOME WHITES), WILL BE

GRATIFIED BY HIS OPEN DISPLAY OF CONTEMPT FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND BY THE PROPAGANDA DEFEAT THAT PRETORIA WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY SUFFER REGARDLESS OF HOW ITS CONFRONTATION WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG TURNS OUT. THERE IS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT HOLDING THAT IT IS PRECISELY THROUGH SUCH FOREIGN-APPLIED SHOCKS THAT THE APARTHEID SYSTEM CAN BE WEAKENED AND SET UP FOR DOMESTIC DISMANTLING. BY THIS THEORY, MR. YOUNG'S AFFRONT TO PROTOCOL IS A SMALL PRICE TO PAY, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S ANGER AND DISCOMFORT ARE PROOF THAT THE STRATEGY IS WORKING.

4. WE HAVE GRAVE MISGIVINGS, WHICH EXTEND CONSIDERABLY BEYOND THE QUESTION OF HOW THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE REACTED IF, SAY, MOSCOW AND PEKING HAD PRIVATELY ARRANGE; TO SEND DELEGATIONS TO WATTS AFTER THE RIOTS--THE ANALOGY IS NOT ALL THAT FARFETCHED. THE QUESTION WE ASK IS HOW BEST CAN THE UNITED STATES GAIN THE COOPERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA FOR 1) BRINGING MAJORITY RULE PROMPTLY TO RHODESIA AN; NAMIBIA AND 2) HASTENING TOLERABLY ORDERLY CHANGE WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF. IS IT BETTER TO REGARD THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA AS A PARTNER, HOWEVER RELUCTANT AND UNRELIABLE, IN ONE OR BOTH OF THESE ENTERPRISES, OR AS AN ADVERSARY? CAN WE HAVE IT BOTH WAYS, DEMANDING PRETORIA'S DIPLOMATIC COOPERATION EVEN WHILE MAKING IT CLEAR THAT ITS PAYOFF IS NOT A CERTAIN UNDERSTANDING OF ITS DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES BUT A MORE INSISTENT PRESSURE TO UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 204948 TOSEC 040093

RESOLVE THEM? GRANTED, IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE OUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO. BUT GIVEN ;HE SEIGE MENTALITY THAT DOMINATES THE RULING NATIONALIST PARTY, IS THERE NOT A RISK THAT SUCH PRESSURE WILL SQUEEZE OUT WHAT ADMITTEDLY FEW MODERATE TENDENCIES EXIST WITHIN IT?

5. IN FACT, THIS INCIDENT ILLUSTRATES NOT SO MUCH MR. YOUNG'S IDIOSYNCRATIC STYLE, BY NOW ALMOST A BORE, AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S FAILURE TO DATE TO ARTICULATE OR, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, TO COMPOSE A COHERENT AFRICAN POLICY. SINCE VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE IS ABOUT TO MEET SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER JOHN VORSTER IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S FIRST POLICY-LEVEL CONTACT WITH PRETORIA, THE LAG IS A SERIOUS ONE. THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENE, AFTER ALL, IS INCREDIBLY COMPLEX AND VOLATILE. GOOD INTENTIONS ALONE ARE OF SCANT VALUE. ILL-CONSIDERED INVOLVEMENT OF A SORT THAT PROMOTED MORE RATHER THAN LESS VIOLENCE COULD HAVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES, OF WHICH AMERICAN EMBARRASSMENT MIGHT BE ONE OF THE SMALLER. THE EFFECT ON THE WELFARE OF THOSE MILLIONS OF SOUTH AFRICANS WHOSE RACIAL RELATIONS THE UNITED STATES IS TRYING, AT LONG RANGE, TO REORDER MUST BE THE DOMINATING CONSIDERATION.

6. IN OTHER AREAS OF FOREIGN POLICY, THE ADMINISTRATION

HAS TRIED HARD, AND WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS, TO GAIN
ADVANCE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING FOR ITS PURPOSES IN NEGOTIA-
TION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES. IT HAS NOT DONE SO IN
RESPECT TO SOUTH AFRICA. RATHER IT HAS PERMITTED THE
IMPRESSION TO BE SPREAD THAT IT IS ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS
SUCH AS ANDREW YOUNG TO IMPROVISE POLICY ON THE BASIS OF
PERSONAL PREDILECTIONS. HANDING MR. MONDALE THE VORSTER
BRIEF DOES NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE VICE PRESIDENT
DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE COMMUNICATED EVEN TO THE ADMINISTRA-
TION'S OWN FOREIGN POLICY BUREAUCRACY WHAT IT IS HE IS
SETTING OUT TO DO. THERE IS A REAL DANGER HERE OF RUNNING
OFF THE RAILS IF THE ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT SLOW DOWN,
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 204948 TOSEC 040093

FIGURE OUT A POLICY THAT IS AT ONCE RESPONSIBLE AND
FEASIBLE AND LIKELY TO SECURE A SOLID DOMESTIC UNDER-
PINNING, AND EXPLAIN IT CLEARLY, FIRST AT HOME.

END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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